JOE PENNER'S JOY BOOK 10¢

THE LOVE LETTERS OF A DUCK SALESMAN

Funny Stories! Funny cartoons! Funny Photographs!
Words and Music of his Famous Songs
The Story of His Amazing Life

THE BIRTH OF A GAG LINE

SAY, where do you suppose Joe Penner gets all those funny expressions of his?

If you haven't been asked that yet, it won't be long before you are.

"Yo-o-ou silly citizen," you can answer your inquirer, "you mean to say you don't know? Why I can give you all the lowdown on it."

"I don't believe it," he'll answer. "How could you possibly know Joe's professional secrets? You don't mean to say you've got an inside track."

"To be sure. To be sure," you answer. "Haven't you seen Joe Penner's Joy Book?"

"Oh woe is me. Oh, wo-ho-ho is me. I never have."

"Well," you continue proudly, "it's all in there. The origin of some of his gag lines is finally revealed."

"O-o-oh! I didn't kno-o-ow that," your friend answers. "What's a gag line?"

Here's what you tell him.

In the first place, in the language of the show business, a gag line is a humorous expression usually identified with one particular comedian, a silly saying used over and over and theoretically always good for a laugh.

When Joe was a green kid starting out in the show business, he did a "Dutch" dialect. By adopting a stutter and using it with his natural lisp, he stood out from the horde of comics using the German accent.

Joe's individuality stands out sharply when you realize how few comedians can imitate his laugh successfully. It's a feat requiring special physical training, and is done by drawing a deep breath, exhaling quickly, and laughing at the end of the exhalation to the last ounce of air. Most people can't do it without experiencing soreness in lungs and abdominal muscles. Joe, himself, in fact, when playing in Denver, had great trouble laughing this way, so rare was the air.

BUT those gag lines. Well, some of them just pop out. Most of the favorite expressions, used since the stage days, weren't planned. He doesn't recall exactly when, but it was some time during his career as a burlesque comedian that his straight man annoyed him and he cried out, "Do-o-on't never do-o-o that!" The audience roared and Joe kept the line. "Yo-o-ou na-ha-sty man" originated in much the same manner when Joe was playing in Publix Theatres throughout the country.

Some of his lines are the result of a definitely traceable evolution. For instance, that completely inane, irresistibly amusing expression of his, "Wanna buy a duck?" got its start in what he calls one of his "two people jokes."

Some of you will recall the following from his pre-radio days:

"Wanna buy an ash barrel?" he would demand of his straight man who expected anything.

"No, I don't want to buy an ash barrel."

"Does your brother wanna buy an ash barrel?" Penner would continue.

"I haven't got a brother."

"Well," Joe would insist, "if you had a brother, would he wanna buy an ash barrel?"

"No!" would come the vociferous reply.

"Yo-o-ou na-ha-sty man!"

Joe found that the ash barrel line always got a laugh but not quite enough to satisfy him. He tried, with varying degrees of success, "Wanna buy a rhinosommonous?" "Wanna buy a hippopottomommonous?" and others. But the day he hit upon "Wanna buy a duck?" the audience shrieked, it was so utterly ridiculous. Joe has used it ever since, and so far, it hasn't become too tiresome.

Lest it does, Joe is making an effort to create new gag lines in every broadcast. He takes some phrase often used in every day life such as "To be sure. To be sure." Or "Don't be silly. Don't be silly." This, he applies to his gargling, lisping execution. Just watch for those new gag lines and see if they catch on like the ones he has used all along. Of course he's not abandoning the old ones entirely, but he doesn't want to overdo them.

He's afraid, you might tell your friend, that if he does, too many of his listeners will snap right back at him: "Yo-o-ou uncouth individual!"

So this is how those funny lines originated! "Oh-h-oh! We didn't kno-o-o-ow that!"

Joe Penner's Joy Book published and copyrighted by Dell Publishing Company, Inc., 149 Madison Avenue, New York City.

Joe Penner

JOE PENNER DOING HIS DIZZY LAUGH

THE STORY OF *Joe Penner's* AMAZING LIFE!

When Joe Penner came to America at the age of nine, his mother met him with open arms crying, "My boy! My boy!" "Who is this woman?" calmly asked Joe who hadn't seen her for six years

(Above) Here he is. That funny fellow, Joe Penner. Read his life story and then listen to his broadcasts. (Left) This picture shows Joe many years ago before ducks ever came into his life.

All photographs by Wide World, Culver and Jackson

YAWING violently as she careened down a mountainous wave, the "S. S. Carpathia" buried her nose in another towering wall of green water and shuddered from stem to stern at the impact.

Far down in the steerage cooped up for two days below closed hatches, a nine-year-old lad was huddled on his berth, awed into silence by the majestic fury of the Atlantic storm. The straining throb of the engines and the weird creaks from the vitals of the straining leviathan was fearsome music to little Joseph Pinter.

The storm-tossed vessel was chanting a song that foretold the boy's future, a life in which he, like the laboring ship, would be cruelly buffeted about as he battled his way toward the seemingly unattainable beacon light of stardom. In the terrifying strangeness of his surroundings, young Pinter, the unknown immigrant boy, was sampling the first of many trying hours to follow before he was to delight the nation as Joe Penner, radio comedian.

Here on the "Carpathia," the rescuer of the "Titanic" survivors, Joseph's grandfather was his only link with the gentle, peaceful life he'd known in NadgBechkereck, Hungary, where he was born in 1904. There was nothing else to remind him of home. The food, what there was of it, was different. The imagination of the steerage kitchen cooks seemed to extend little beyond rolls, coffee and a strange substance called butter, which they used instead of the delicious goose grease he had thought all civilized people ate.

Joseph knew only that he was bound for some vague place called Detroit. He was being taken to his mother and father. That fact had but faint significance for him, since for six years his grandfather and grandmother had been the only parents he had known, and he never

Joe Penner didn't mind posing with a violin so much, but when it came to playing the thing? Well, that was another story.

suspected that he would not resume, on his arrival in his new home, the quiet existence he had known in Hungary, where his grandfather was a rector of the reformed church.

LIKE a far off dream was little Joseph's memory of his mother. Dimly he recalled the day he sat in the garden swing and a young woman, beautifully gowned, came and kissed him.

"I'm going away, Joseph," she said.

"Where, mamma?" he demanded.

"To America. I'll send you a horse so you can ride to visit me."

The three-year-old boy had grinned at her, confident that America was no further away than around the corner. When, a few days later, a rocking horse arrived at his house, and he discovered he could get nowhere on it, he was so chagrined that he battered it to pieces. Soon afterward the memory of his mother began to fade away.

Standing on a lower deck as the "Carpathia" steamed up New York Harbor, little Joseph clutched his grandfather's coat in terror at the spectacle before him. Hundreds of tall buildings rose from the narrow base of Manhattan Island, and every one of them was on fire, or so it seemed to Joe when he saw the pillars of smoke rising from their tops. For two days he watched the fearsome sight from the immigrant station on Ellis Island in the harbor, then he and his grandfather boarded a train for Michigan.

Out of the confusion in the Detroit station rushed a comely young woman to catch up the little boy in her arms, crushing in her fervor the great map of Hungary which Joseph was bringing to his uncle.

"My boy, my boy," she wept.

Uncertain at this unbridled display of emotion, Joe turned to his grandfather, "Who is this lady, father?" he demanded.

"It's your mother, my boy," his grandfather replied in a choked voice. "And you must remember that I am not now your father. You have come home."

All the way to the house in which he was to live, Joseph stared in wonderment at this beautiful woman whom they said was his mother.

THE next morning, awakened early by a curiosity to explore his new home, Joe drew a brightly colored jersey over his nightshirt and tiptoed downstairs. Passing through the kitchen, he noticed a tub full of laundry and deciding his jersey might as well be washed, too, pulled it off and tossed it in.

He pranced gaily out into the back yard, then stopped dead, staring in amazement at the narrow confines of his new playground, and the buildings rising all about it.

Suddenly there came a stinging blow from behind. "You bad, bad boy," his mother's voice scolded, "Spoiling my white linen by throwing your colored jersey in it. Then, to make things worse, you go out into the back yard where everyone can see you with nothing on but a nightgown."

More blows. It was his first licking. He crept off by himself and wept softly. He wished he were back in Hungary. His mind dwelt on the happy days he had spent there.

He thought of the Catholic church which had been so beautiful to him. That was the one which had the great carillon whose huge bells had been heard 200 miles across the plains in Budapest. It took six men to start the largest bell tolling. To its rope was fastened a little stool on which Joe used to ride, thrillingly up and down as the bell swung. He had tried the same trick in the reformed church by holding on to the rope with his hands and had been badly skinned against the rough wall of the bell tower as a result.

But such difficulties seemed welcome beside the predicament he felt himself to be in now. He even looked back with favor on the disastrous episode at the Bega Canal. He had come down with hundreds of others to watch the Monday morning fishing boats from the bridge. Thwarted in his efforts to get a better view by trying to squirm between the legs of a male spectator, Joe had awaited his opportunity, backed away, and

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PENNER-LAFF! Joe met a friend he hadn't seen for years in a night club. The friend was with a beautiful blonde and they had quite a time of it. "I'll send my girl friend home," the friend told Joe, "and you come out to the house and spend the night with me." Riding out to his house, the friend warned Joe. "I've married the finest woman in the world, Joe. Got a boy eight years old, too. If she asks where I've been, I'll tell her I've been out on business, see."

At breakfast, Joe met the family, both wife and son. "Have a hard evening, dear?" she asked. "Terrific," the the husband said. After a while, the boy got his father to one side. Joe heard him say, "I'll sell you a paper cap and a horn for a dollar, dad." "But no cap and horn are worth that much," said the parent. "But these are," insisted the kid. "They're the one's I found in your coat pocket after you came in last night."

taken a running dive. Unfortunately, the man spread his legs further apart just as Joe launched himself, and he went flying off the bridge into the shallow canal, burying his head in the muddy bottom. Fishermen rushed to save him. But, he recalled, he had not been punished for that—just reprimanded.

OF course he was too young to realize the reason for his changed circumstances. His parents had lived in poverty in Hungary and it was because of each other and Joe that they came to America, hoping to be able to create more comfortable lives for themselves.

Detroit was just beginning to be interested in automobiles and Joe's father found work as a laborer. His mother worked hard, too, that they might save enough to bring their boy to them.

"I even scrubbed floors," his mother said recently. "One place where I scrubbed there was a child, just the age of my darling. When I was on my hands and knees, he thought it great fun to climb on my back. Once he caught me crying and asked me why. I told him how he made me think of my little boy so far away."

When Mr. Pinter got his job in the Ford factory, they sent for their son. Having known how hard life could be, they wanted him to grow up well educated and cultured. That's where his troubles began. Big, nine-year-old boy that he was, knowing not a word of English, he had to start his education in this strange new world in a kindergarten.

Imagine a husky boy of his age seated among five-year-olds. The little ones poked fun at him, at his size, at his inability to speak their language. The gentle, sensitive lad knew no method of retaliation. Yet these barbed darts of humiliation goaded him to greater effort. With a rigid Hungarian school training behind him, he forged ahead to the second, to the fifth and then to the eighth grade.

To add to the trials of adjusting himself to this bewildering environment, he trudged a weary newspaper route in Highland Park, the section of Detroit in which he lived.

HIS teachers predicted for him a far different career than that which he ultimately pursued. Perhaps, if his family had had more money, he might have become Joseph Pinter, concert singer, rather than Joe Penner, comedian, for he had a fine soprano voice. It so charmed his teachers that they had him sing during the Liberty Loan drives. At that time he was studying voice under the competent choir master of St. Paul's Cathedral.

This would have brought him joy, had it not been for one thing. True enough, he still loved churches, he was highly pleased with the purple robes and wide starched collar they gave him to wear when he sang in the choir, and the thirty-eight cents he was paid every Sunday. But he was ashamed. All the other boys came from well-to-do families and wore nice clothes. Joe's mother, of course, always saw that he was neatly dressed, but it wasn't the same. He felt inferior and quit. And promise of his singing career vanished.

His chances for expressing himself in song repressed, Joe listened eagerly to the stories of the amateur nights held at various Detroit theatres. The two and three

When this pretty picture, stone dog and all, was taken, the subject was known as Joseph Pinter. But the years changed that.

dollar prizes offered for the winning performances were irresistible.

Joe made his first appearance dressed in a pair of shoes, pants and a hat, all belonging to his father. In his hand he swung a bamboo cane. A ridiculous moustache was stuck on his lip. He was doing a Charlie Chaplin imitation.

His father had coached him and in the basement of his home he had practiced before a callow audience of friends. But he hadn't counted on being billed that first amateur night with a dozen other youngsters under the spell of the Chaplin influence. Most of those who preceded him fared badly. Joe, fidgeting in the wings, was sure that he would, too. As a matter of fact, when he appeared on the stage, he would have also, but for one fact. He had been inspired to bring along a toy balloon to kick about with Chaplinesque antics—a true inspiration, for the audience applauded him though it had hooted

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PENNER-LAFF! Joe and his wife were on their way to Bermuda. With them was Willie, the six-year-old son of friends of theirs that they were taking on vacation. En route, the seas became heavy and the boat began to pitch and toss. First, Mrs. Penner became ill. Then, Joe. They lay in their bunks while their stomachs tried to turn inside out. Little Willie never even felt bad. He raced around the cabin, chattering, jumping off the beds, having a great time. Finally, when he started skinning the cat on a rod, the sight was too much for the dejected Mrs. Penner. "Joe," she said. "Won't you speak to that boy." Joe lifted his head from the pillow. He fixed the boy with a wan look. In a thin, desperate voice, he said, "Hello, Willie."

Proud parents are Mr. and Mrs. Pinter. Here they are in their Detroit, Michigan, home listening to their son, Joe, on his weekly broadcast. Notice the two pictures of the favorite son on top of the radio. Mr. and Mrs. Pinter are both natives of Hungary where Joe was born.

most of the others. Needless to say, the most enthusiastic applause in the audience came from proud Mr. and Mrs. Pinter.

FROM that moment on, through the hard years that were to follow, an unquenchable ambition burned in his brain. Stage and stardom were the greatest things in life for him. Nothing would do, but that he follow the trail.

Joe lived for amateur nights. In the outlying theatres in Highland Park, Hamtramck and old Delray he played. With some amusement he admits today that there was much to be desired in his showmanship. A falsetto singing act succeeded for a time, but competition became too keen. There were others out for prizes. An amateur night bill, for instance, would include the little girl with big bow ribbons in her hair, singing cute songs while her mother stood in the wings; the little boy decked out with roughneck clothes singing such tear jerkers as "My Mother's Rosary;" and the pathetic old man delivering his song in a trembling voice.

"What's that big mug trying to do? Take the prizes away from the little boys and girls and old men?" That's the way the audiences reacted to Joe. When they started hooting him, he purchased a cheap joke book and reeled off gags, tirelessly. He was too innocent to know whether they were off-color or not. He made a hit.

Despite their lack of money, his mother, steadfast in her hopes of making a cultured young man of him, secured the services of a temperamental Hungarian violin teacher. Like all regular guys, Joe balked at practice and lessons. It so happened that when the teacher came for the third time, his mother was away. Annoyed at having to leave a baseball game Joe delivered his lesson with a lavish sprinkling of sour notes.

"Give me that," his irritated teacher demanded. Snatching the bow from the boy's fingers, he rapped him across the knuckles.

Enraged, Joe hit back. The infuriated teacher seized the violin, slammed it down and stalked out of the room. He never returned.

Meeting the teacher on the street some time later, and learning the whole story, Joe's mother was bitterly disappointed. Yet, today, he plays the violin very credit-

PENNER-LAFF!

Monk: I'm tired of working here. Being your stooge isn't so hot. I'm going somewhere and make a living out of my wit.

Joe: Okay, but you'll find it tough getting along on only half a living.

ably—for a man who uses only two fingers to get results.

THE meager prizes occasionally won at amateur nights were not enough, in Joe's opinion, for him to bring home to a family none to well-off. He quit school and got a job in the Ford factory as a mail boy at eighteen dollars a week. Awed by his daily contacts with Henry and Edsel Ford as he brought messages to them, he didn't realize that he was temperamentally unfitted for such work. He plugged steadily away until he was advanced to a position paying some $220 per month.

The importance of his responsibilities never dawned on him until he was nearly discharged because of carelessness in handling a shipment, costing the company $900. From that moment on he knew that this was not the future for him. When a big lay-off of men was necessary, and jobs had to be confined to one in each family, Joe was glad to quit.

His first and last scrap occurred about this time. A natural penchant for clowning had already gained him a sort of life-of-the-party reputation and he was popular among his acquaintances. Popular, that is, with all but one. That young man in particular took a great dislike to Joe and never hesitated to tell him so.

The one-sided feud came to a head at a Saturday night dance near one of the theatres in which Joe had been playing. His enemy's girl friend approached him.

"Why don't you ever speak to me?" she demanded.

"I didn't think you liked me," countered Joe.

"You're afraid of me," was her retort. "I bet you're even afraid to dance with me."

"I certainly am not," he replied, swinging her out onto the floor.

Joe was not new on the stage while yet in his teens and sporting his first suit of long trousers.

THE dance over, his enemy came up and roughly demanded to know who gave him permission to dance with the girl.

"No one," replied Joe.

"Well don't do it again or there'll be trouble. I don't like you, see?"

"Okay," answered Joe coolly, who was mild mannered and never looked for fights.

But his enemy was bearing a decidedly insecure chip on his shoulder that night. As everyone was piling down the stairs at the end of the dance, Joe's opponent seized him roughly by the coat lapel. "I don't like you," he repeated savagely.

"All right," answered Joe mildly, "so what?" He had no desire to become embroiled in a pointless battle.

But the fellow wasn't to be put off. He was older and bigger, and had all the swaggering assurance of a tough. In less than a minute they were outside the dance hall, swinging at one another. Joe fought as hard as he could, crying with rage. Often he has cried uncontrollably when excited or angry; it's not because he hasn't courage, it's merely that he can't help it. In no time at all, noses were spurting blood, then at the climax of the setto came the cry:

"Cheese it! The cops!"

The combatants separated hurriedly, Joe ducked down an alley with a friend. He slipped along devious ways, not daring to go home. His mother mustn't know. At his friend's house he made feeble efforts to clean off the blood, then went home and crept quietly up to bed. The next day he managed to hide the remaining evidence of the fight.

Joe hasn't fought since then—he doesn't see any point in it. And as far as his mother is concerned, well, when she reads this, it will be the first time she knew that he ever fought at all.

JOE'S first plunge into the professional theatre came at the time he was selling Story and Clarke pianos and phonographs for Grinnell Brothers, a Detroit firm. Fired by the footlight tales of a fellow salesman, a little Scotchman, the old stage urge seized him again. Assuring him of his excellence as a professional entertainer, the Scotsman persuaded Joe to accompany him to the United Booking Office of Detroit.

The agent suggested they go to the Gladwyn Park Theatre where professional tryouts were given every Friday night. Having no other place, the two hopefuls stood on the sidewalk in the evenings and much to the surprise and irritation of their neighbors, rehearsed their act.

But as they stood in the wings of the theatre their confidence ebbed rapidly. The Scotchman went on first. His mouth worked, but Joe, awaiting his cue, heard no sounds issue from it. After long, agonizing moments Joe decided to make his entrance, anyhow. The first gag drew forth a disconcerting horse laugh from an unappreciative audience.

They went through the act, the Scotchman barely whispering, "My Wild Irish Rose" and Joe's violin shrieking out sour notes from trembling fingers. Not even a horse

PENNER-LAFF!

Monk: Say, I was in a speakeasy this afternoon and, believe it or not, I found a ten-dollar bill.
Joe: I already knew it.

Monk: You knew it? How'd you know it?
Joe: I smelled it on your breath.

laugh came when the act was over, and that, any actor will tell you, is about the most humiliating thing in the world.

They crept back to their dressing room. Now off the stage, the Scotchman regained his boastful confidence. Together they weighed the possibilities of the decision the manager would give when he came to their dressing room as he had promised. The minutes dragged on. Finally, came the knock on the door. They leaped to their feet.

"Sorry, suh," said the negro janitor poking his head in, "evvybody done gone houahs ago and we is lockin' up."

LATER, Joe discovered that the Scotchman had never before had any stage experience.

Joe concluded that he had better keep on selling musical instruments and for a while he managed to convince himself that pianos were his forte. But the memory of the spotlight, humiliating though it had been, burned feverishly in his mind. He bought a copy of "Billboard," the theatrical magazine, and scanned its help wanted columns.

"Mind reader wants assistant," an advertisement read.

"If I try this," he thought, "it won't be the same as going into the theatre. It's just so I can work both night and day and make more money." But he knew very well that the show world had caught him in its spell. He thrilled at the letter which told him the job was his.

He did very well until the evening the robe for which he was responsible, slipped off the wire dummy in the floating lady act, exposing the trick to the audience. He realized he was on the point of being fired. Besides, why should he care, this was hardly the life he had expected to lead as a member of the theatrical profession.

His real chance came the night the mind reader was on the bill at the Gratiot Theatre, Detroit. Joe noticed the manager of a tab show, one of those vaudeville troupes of a dozen or fifteen people, pacing up and down the wings waving his arms about wildly. It was nearly time for the show to go on and the second comedian was missing. There was no time to get another.

Joe stepped up. "I've watched him. I know his act. Lemme go on for him."

The manager stared at him incredulously. "What? You? A kid like you? Get away from me." And he resumed his frantic striding.

"Please, mister," pleaded the would-be actor, "gimme a chance. You gotta have somebody."

In ten minutes Joe was on the stage, a full fledged member of a tab show. The regrets that he felt half an hour later were nothing to those that overwhelmed him after the show the next night. Both times he got a taste of the very thing that was to keep him in trouble during his bitter struggle to stardom.

Joe, you see, couldn't help being funny. And when the first comedians are supposed to get the laughs, amusing conduct on the part of others in show business is unpardonable. The first night he stood at the end of the stage opposite the first comedian, mugging, which is show language for making funny faces. The house roared with laughter. Afterward, the first comedian roared, too—but with anger. Joe innocently declared that he thought he was helping out by taking one side of the house while the comedian took the other.

SO great was the principal's wrath that the next night, during a burlesque boxing match which was part of the act, the first comedian lashed into him with stinging blows. Joe's retaliation made it a no less bitter beginning for the inexperienced, sensitive boy of eighteen that he was. Yet he stuck on, only to find himself stranded in Toledo soon afterward. He had just adopted the stage name, Joe Penner, but there was no billing for it.

After knocking around for many lean, hungry days during which dollars were like dreams and dimes the only realities, Joe answered an advertisement for a tab show comedian. His clothes were too shabby for a stage appearance. He pawned his overcoat and fiddle for money to groom himself as well as he could. On his arrival in Salem, Ohio, where he was to join the troupe, Joe was stunned to find he couldn't qualify for the position unless he had a trunkful of costumes. All he had was a suitcase almost empty.

(Right) Mr. and Mrs. Joe Penner, one of the happiest couples on Radio Row. Before her marriage to the comedian in 1928, Mrs. Penner was Miss Eleanor Mae Vogt.

PENNER-LAFF! Joe was being entertained at a banquet in a small town. The chairman, a pompous old gent, making the introduction, said, "This man is known all over America. His fame today spreads everywhere. He is the toast of the nation. It gives me pleasure to present Mr.—er-r-r—Mr.—" Turning, he said, "Pardon, son, what's your name?"

Somewhat embarrassed, Joe told him and rose to make his speech. "Gentlemen," he began, "since I was a small boy I have thought of visiting your fine town. I have heard of it for years. Everybody speaks well of it. Gentlemen, it is a pleasure to come to—er-r—to—" Turning to the chairman, he said, "Pardon, sir, what's the name of this town?"

(Left) "Do you wanna buy a duck?" No! "Well, does your brother wanna buy one?" I have no brother! "Well, if you had a brother, do you think he'd consider it?"

Here was the youngster, miles from home, no job and but twenty-five cents in his pockets. The memory of his mother's opposition to his going on the stage burned in his mind. His old nervous reaction seized him. He wept hysterically on the stage manager's shoulder.

It was that very desire to show his family that he could win in the work of which they disapproved that kept him going. Under the best of circumstances, the life of a tab-show trouper with its meager pay is none too good. And the fact that Joe couldn't help being funny was still getting him into trouble.

HAVING worked back to Detroit, he got a job with a burlesque show as straight man. It wasn't what he wanted to do, but he had learned by now not to be particular. The comedian against whom he was playing, refused to give him any lines to study. Joe sensed something ominous in this refusal.

"It's okay," the comedian insisted, "forget about it. I'll take care of everything."

And he certainly did. After a few quips the opening night, the comedian suddenly seized Joe, shook him violently, tore his shirt to shreds and sent him staggering off the stage. To the audience it was uproarious comedy. To Joe it was tragedy. His shirts were too few and to go on getting bruised every night was too much to expect.

Spartanlike, he stood it for a week. Then he rebelled. Without a word to the other comedian, he wrote some gags of his own, delivered them, and stole the show. And for being funny, just that one time, he was fired.

Despite the jealousies of older troupers, not as funny as Joe, it was inevitable that a Broadway scout would discover his flair for comedy. And after all his bitter hardships, he suddenly found himself in the "Greenwich Village Follies."

There, as the young star of the show, he was looked upon by one person in particular, not with awe, but with apparent disdain. That person was Eleanor Mae Vogt, vivacious and pretty dancer.

Though she used to call him "high pockets" and he used to call her "snooty," the more discerning members of the cast observed that she hung around in the wings so that Joe was forced to speak to her when he made his entrances. And the future was really settled as far as Eleanor was concerned when he took her girl friend out one night and spent the whole evening talking about a dancer named Eleanor Mae Vogt.

Joe expected that holiday week in St. Louis would be just another lonesome Christmas for him. But St. Louis happened to be Eleanor's home town. The spirit of the season broke down all barriers between them. Eleanor invited him to her home. After that they were very good friends—more than that, for on November 8, 1928, they were married.

HE would never be a success as a radio comedian, Joe told agents who approached him two years ago. Weren't his cigar, his mugging and his pantomime nine-tenths of his appeal to theatre-goers. But the agents persisted and to keep them quiet, Joe consented to give an audition.

Without enthusiasm, Joe sang and talked into the microphone. In fact, he was so certain that radio was not for him that he did what show people call "lousing it up." He made it as terrible as he could.

"Do it over again," the agency officials commanded. Joe complied, sure, now, that he had been so bad that they couldn't believe their ears.

With many misgivings, Joe accepted the spot proffered him on Rudy Vallee's variety program. He didn't like the idea at all. He was afraid he would flop on the air so completely it would hurt him in the theatrical world.

Of course, it's not necessary to tell you how mistaken he was, for as a radio king comic he has broken many theatre attendance records.

How does he take this amazing success? Well, it might have been different if he had shot right up to fame. But as it is, he is still amazingly modest and pleasant, and a good husband to his adored wife who is looked upon as a daughter by his loving parents. Battered about though he was during his career, the sweetness never did seem to get kicked out of Joe Penner.

PENNER-LAFF! Joe was visiting a friend one afternoon whose ten-year-old boy came in with his face smeared. "I've been in a huckleberry pie-eating contest," he announced.

"How many pieces did you eat?" Joe asked.

"Twenty-six," said the lad.

"Wonderful! Did you win?"

"No," the youth replied sadly, "another fellow ate thirty pieces and won first prize."

"But why didn't you eat five more pieces and beat him? Didn't you have any room?"

"I had plenty of room, all right," the lad replied. "But, heck, Mr. Penner, I don't like huckleberries."

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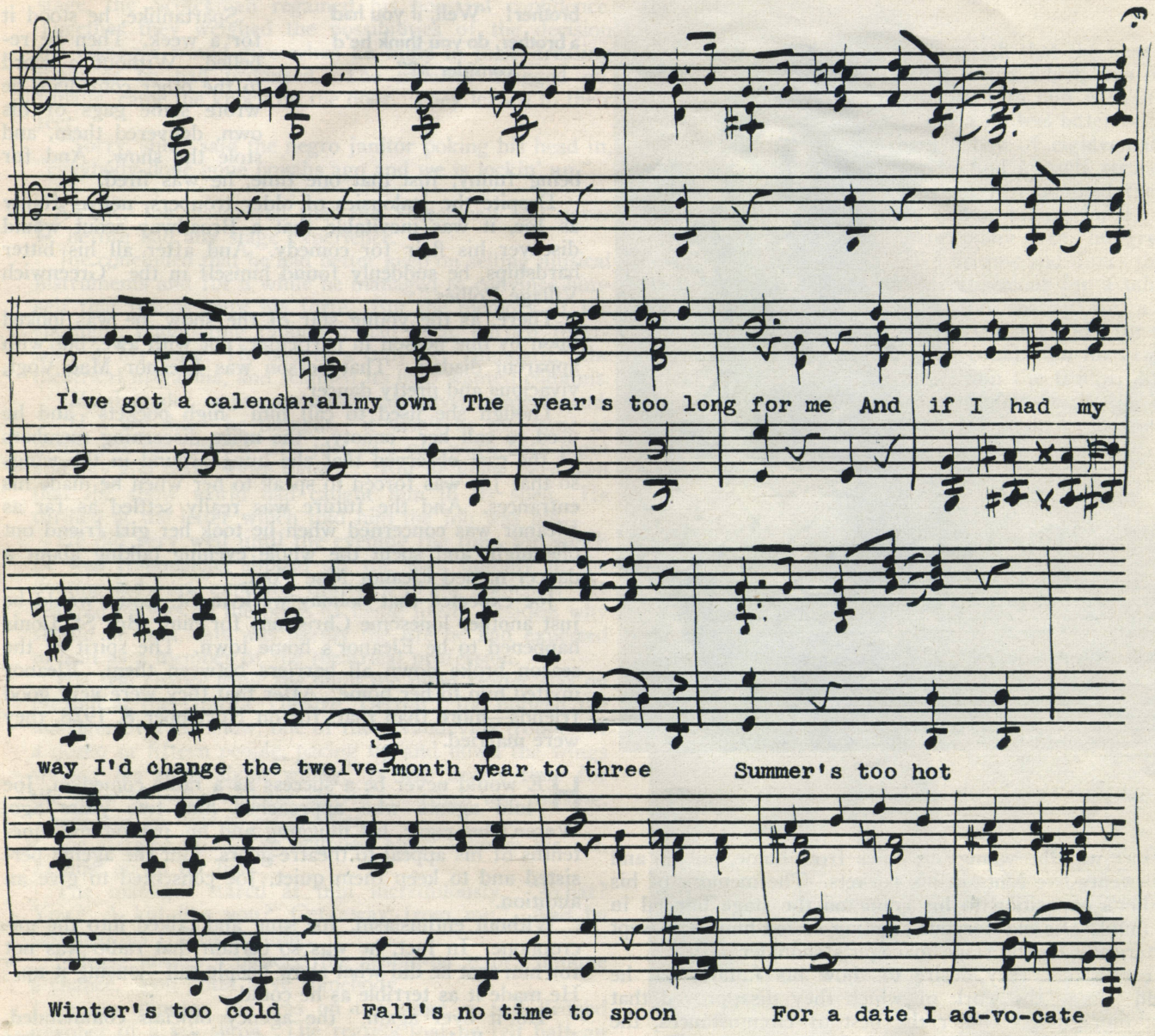
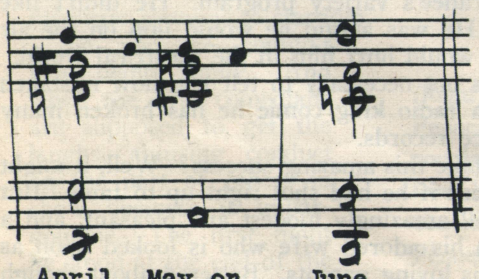
SPRING IS


I've got a calendar all my own The year's too long for me And if I had my
way I'd change the twelve-month year to three Summer's too hot
Winter's too cold Fall's no time to spoon For a date I ad-vo-cate

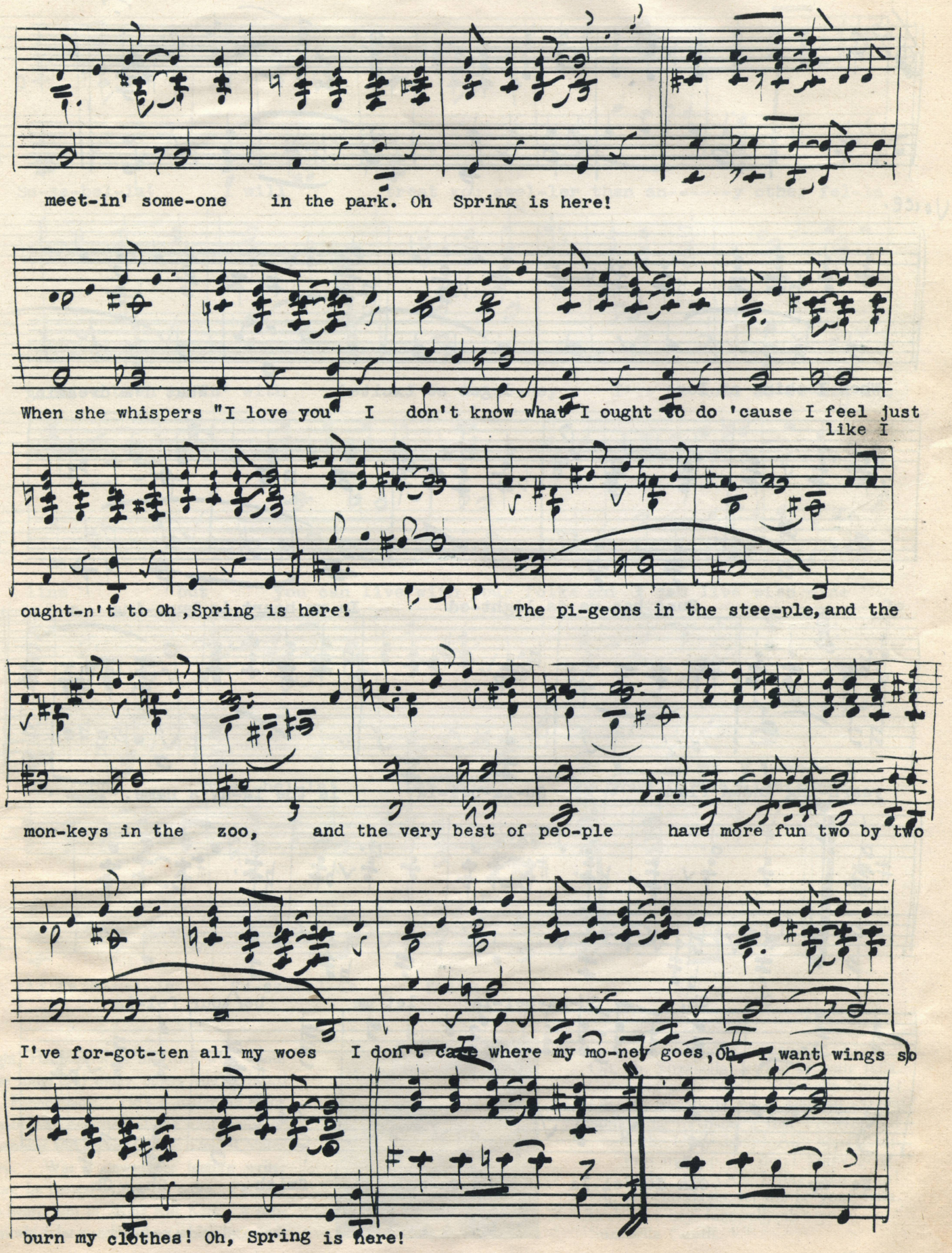


Second Chorus:

The cowslip moss! an' slips me by.
The weeping willow dries its eye.
And papa Fly goes buzzing by.
'Cause Spring is here!
The woodchuck chucks her winter fur
It's gettin' kinda warm for her
To wear such heavy underwear.
Oh, Spring is here!
And my flannel nightgown is laid away to rest.
It used to warm my bosom, but now it's in my cedar chest.
Froggies croak! Hoot owls Hoot!
Elephants start actin' cute!
And a moth flies out of my bathin' suit!
OO! Spring is here!

HERE . . . !

Music and Lyrics by
Hal Raynor


meet-in' some-one in the park. Oh Spring is here!
When she whispers "I love you" I don't know what I ought to do 'cause I feel just like I
ought-n't to Oh, Spring is here!
The pi-geons in the stee-ple, and the
mon-keys in the zoo, and the very best of peo-ple have more fun two by two
I've for-got-ten all my woes I don't care where my mo-ney goes, Oh I want wings so
burn my clothes! Oh, Spring is here!

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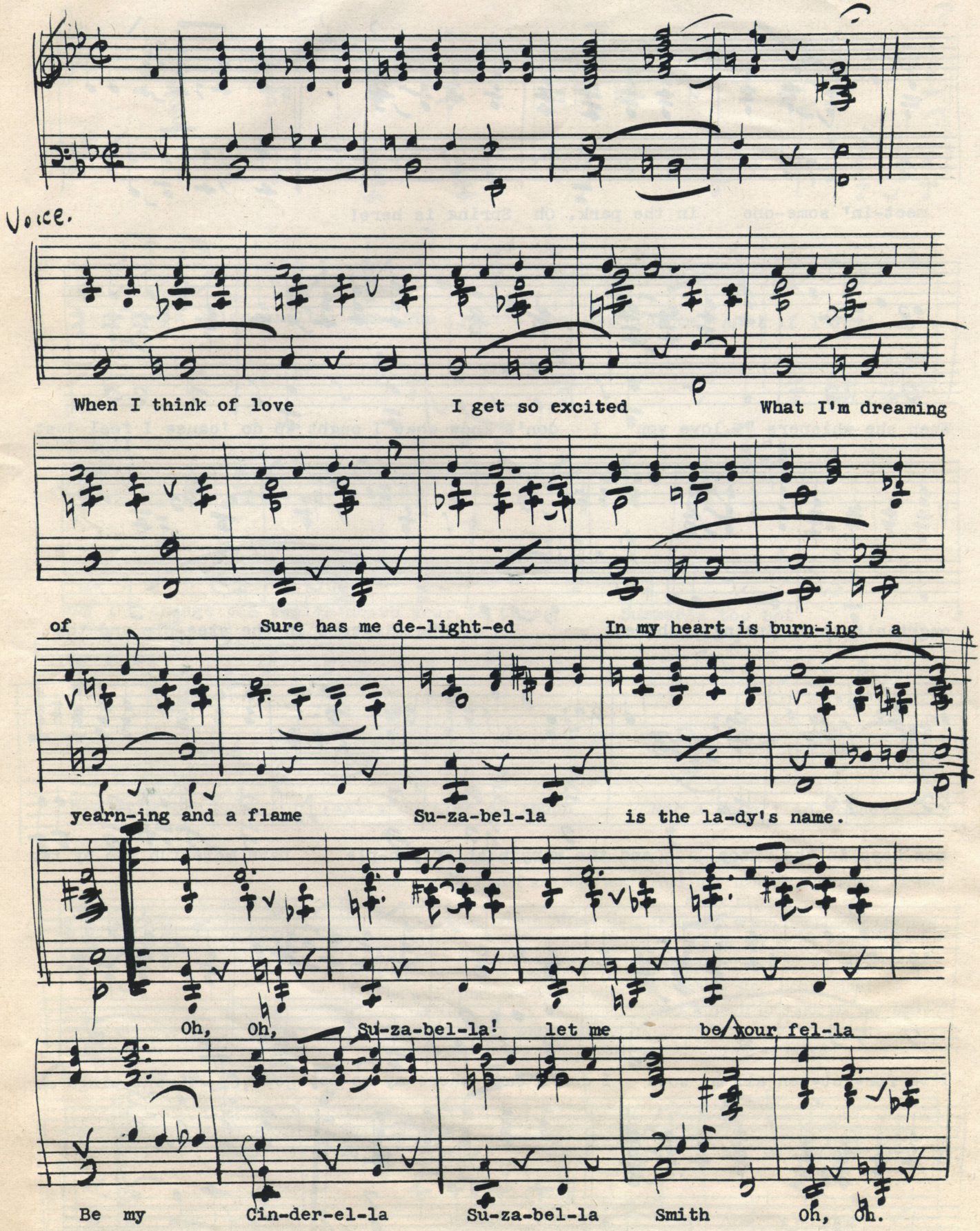
OH, OH,



SUZABELLA

Lyrics and Music by
Hal Raynor

Su-za-bel-la! I will treat you swel-ler than an------y other fel-la
you've been go-in' with I've no mo-ney I've no home No ro-man-tic
FLARE
line but you can live with your folks and I can live with mine
Oh, oh, Su-za-bel-la! Let me be your fel-la Let's not
say fare-wel-la Su-za-bel-la Smith.

(Right) Hal Raynor is the man who wrote these songs and many others you've heard Joe Penner sing. He's a native of Cincinnati, was educated at the University of Wisconsin and served in the United States Navy. Was a newspaper feature writer before he started writing for radio. Perhaps you heard him in "King Kill Kare," a program which he wrote and on which he acted.

Second Chorus:

Oh, oh, Suzabella, let me be your fella.
Come on, oo-la-lalla! Suzabella Smith!
Oh, oh, Suzabella, can't you tell a fella
Something to dispel a fear I'm troubled
with. Upsy-daisy! Ally-oop! Leap
into my lap. I don't know geog-
raphy, but OO, I like your map!
Oh, oh, Suzabella, let me be your fella.
Let's not say farewell, ah
Suzabella Smith.

JOE PENNER AT HOME

(Above) Home to Mr. and Mrs. Joe Penner is an apartment on the twenty-ninth floor of the Hotel St. Moritz overlooking New York's Central Park. Here they are on their terrace, watching the sights many feet below.

(Below) From the looks of that expression on his face, Joe must be doing an aria from Verdi. Notice the modernistic furniture and the stuffed duck so conspicuous on the piano.

(Above) No matter where you go in this home, you'll find ducks. Dozens of 'em of all shapes and sizes. Even Mrs. Penner has a baby duck all dolled up in swaddling clothes. You'll have to admit hubby Joe has to go some to beat that.

(Above) Mr. and Mrs., all settled for a quiet evening at home, forgetting about duck jokes and listening to other comedians for a change. But no matter what he does, or where he is, Joe's cigar is sure to be there.

(Below) Just a dab here and there and Mrs. Penner's make-up meets the approval of critical Joe. If you could look out the window behind Joe, you'd see Central Park.

(Below) "Now if I were you," says the hubby, "I'd read more magazines like that." But what catches our eye is that gorgeous divan and the oil painting on the wall.

"I HAD TO LEAVE IN
AN AWFUL HURRY"

LOVE LETTERS OF A DUCK SALESMAN

Joe Penner must make good! His uncle expects him to sell 10,000 ducks. His engagement to Susabella depends upon the outcome. Read of his thrilling adventures in a girls' school and an asylum trying to make a sale

HOTEL SWELLVUE
Capa City
Wisconsin

My darling Susabella,

Hoopla, hoopla!

Oh, jimminy, I've got the best news in the world. At least in the universe, anyhow. At last I've got my chance and I guess everything will be all set for us to be engaged pretty nearly any day now.

Here I am in Capa City, Wisconsin, and I guess you're surprised all right, expecting me to be at home in Wheelboro, Indiana. How is everybody there? I came out here by sleeper night before last.

I had to leave in an awful hurry because my Uncle Lowbridge said I had to. You know my Uncle Lowbridge the one that owns the Lowbridge Duck Corp. He says he wants to retire and if I can prove I'm a good enough duck salesman he'll turn the business over to me. What I've got to do is to get an order from Mr. Waters who's the head of the Waters' chain of Jitter Cure Sanitariums. I've got to do it before the Downey Duck representative does his sales stuff. I hear he's in town but I haven't seen him yet. I've got to show Mr. Waters that the Lowbridge duck is the best in the world. In other words, I've got to sell the old bird. I mean Waters not the duck.

Won't that be salushus? That'll show you I can really support you if we get married, and then you'll let us be engaged together like you said we could if I could prove I could really support you if we get married.

I really am going to do it this time. You don't think I can, I bet, but I can, and I'm going to show you. You won't ever regret my doing what I am determined to do.

Your sweetie pie,
Joe.

P.S. I meant to say I love you.
P.P.S. Won't this be ducky? Get it?

SUSABELLA BROWN
23 Lovejoy Street
Wheelboro
Indiana

May 25, 1928.

Dear *Mr.* Penner,

Oh, there you are in Capa City, Wisconsin, are you? Well, I am *not* your darling Susabella. And you are *not* my sweetie pie Joe. Not any more. Any boy friend of mine who leaves town without so much as phoning and stands me up for a date for the W.O.O.F. dance doesn't get any pretty words from *me*. You might at least have *wired* me when you arrived in Capa City.

Of course I know Uncle Lowbridge. Didn't I see him 367 days out of the year before he moved to California and started the duck business?

I thought you'd milked your Uncle Hay Lowbridge of all his human kindness by now. But as long as he's been sweet enough to give you one more chance to show him that you can get an order from the Waters Jitter Cure Sanitariums, take the duck by the beak and put the deal across. I'm quite certain it's the last opportunity he'll give you.

And you know what that means, Joe. I'm really very fond of you, but I have no intention of going spinstering along life's highway the rest of my days. After all, Barney Cull *is* a very nice man, and he's saved some money and he *does* want to marry me. Tonight he's going to take me to the Ladies Literary League play they're giving.

I am very much annoyed with you, Joe. Hoping you are the same, I am

Susabella.

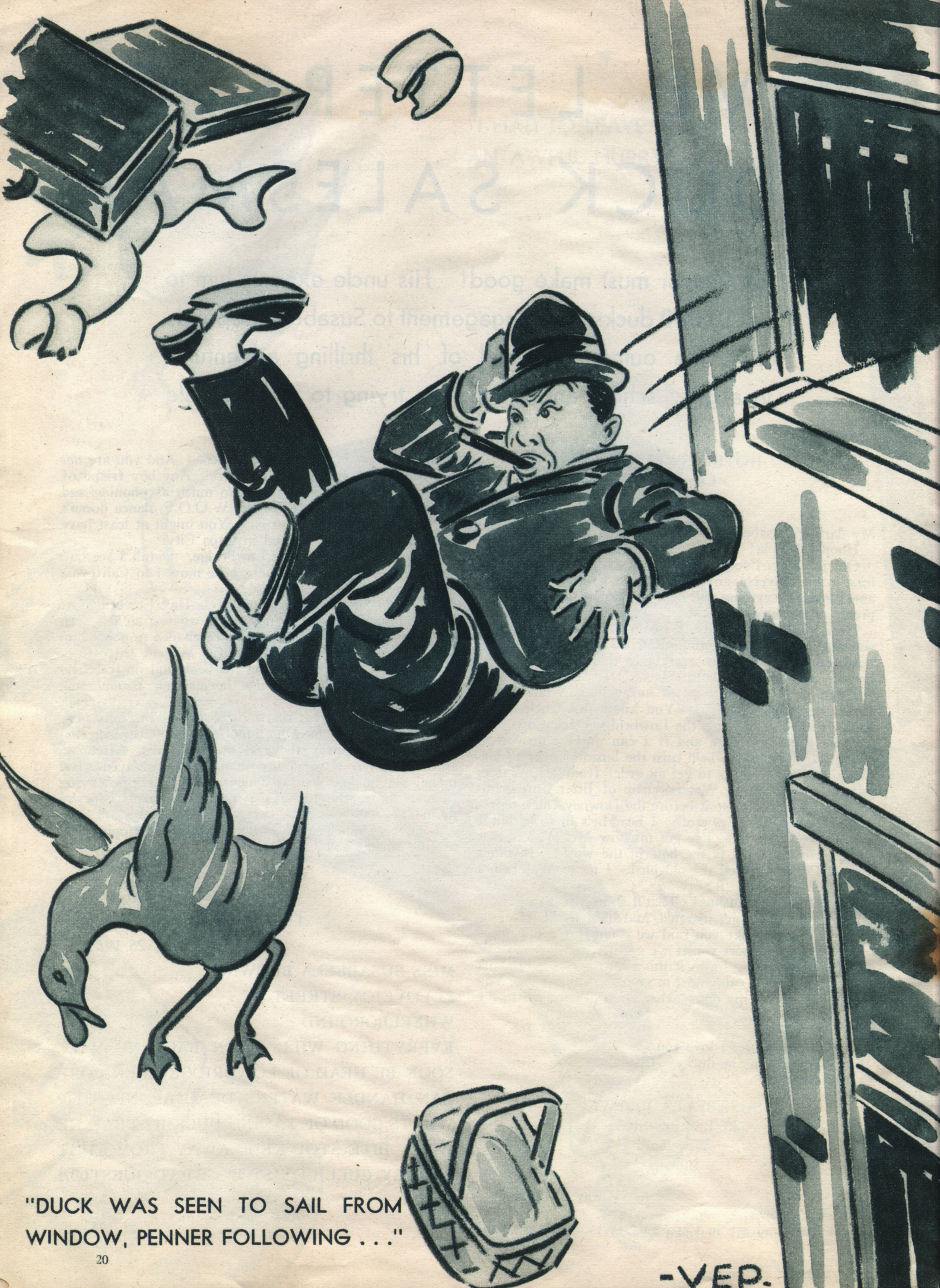
TELEGRAM

MAY 26 1928

MISS SUSABELLA BROWN
23 LOVEJOY STREET
WHEELBORO IND

EVERYTHING WILL BE IN BAG AND WILL SOON BE HEAD OF LOWBRIDGE DUCK CORP CAN HANDLE WATERS DEAL ALONE STOP WHATS GOOD OF TAKING DUCK BY BEAK HE WONT BITE STOP KEEP AWAY FROM THAT BARNEY CULL GUY STOP GET IT QUESTION MARK

JOE



"DUCK WAS SEEN TO SAIL FROM WINDOW, PENNER FOLLOWING . . ."

-VEP.

HOTEL SWELLVUE
Capa City
Wisconsin

May 26, 1928

Mr. Tommy Rawter, Sales Mgr.,
Downey Duck Dealers,
Hilo Alto, Cal.

Dear Rawter:

Your report on the Lowbridge Duck Corp.'s interest in the Waters contract rec'd and beg to state that we are going to put it over on their representative, Joe Penner, like the lid on a sardine can. For your further information, please note that he is very dumb.

I contacted Sally Van Dansa today. She tells me that she grossed sixty thousand on her Dainty Step Inns tea room chain during the last fiscal year. Off the record, T.R., she's a pretty smooth article. The years haven't changed her a bit. She's still the same old vamp and just slick enough to lend a hand to

Your president,
Upton Downey.

P.S. Don't mention Van Dansa to the wife.

TELEGRAM

MAY 27 1928

JOE PENNER
HOTEL SWELLVUE
CAPA CITY WISCONSIN
WHY HAVENT YOU REPORTED YET STOP SEND COMPLETE LETTER ON PROGRESS TO DATE IMMEDIATELY

UNCLE LOWBRIDGE

TELEGRAM

MR HAY LOWBRIDGE
LOWBRIDGE DUCK CORP
SAN INSPINACHA CAL
NO NEED FOR REPORT STOP AM GOING TO SEE WATERS THIS AFTERNOON STOP HE WILL BE CINCH STOP YOU MIGHT AS WELL RETIRE NOW

JOE

HOTEL SWELLVUE
Capa City
Wisconsin

May 28, 1928.

Mr. Tommy Rawter, Sales Mgr.,
Downey Duck Dealers,
Hilo Alto, Cal.

Dear Rawter:

Herewith verbatim report on activities of Lowbridge Duck Corp. salesman named Penner:

Penner was coming out of hotel today just as I was going in. Had sample duck under arm, funny little hat on head, cigar in mouth. Didn't impress me as competent salesman. (Please note, T.R., his sample duck seems much better than ours so will make every effort to keep Waters from seeing his.)

"Say mister, please," he said to me, "will you tell me which way is the Waters Sanitarium?"

"What do you want of that place, young man?" I asked him.

"I'm going to sell Mr. Waters a duck," he answered.

"Is that so?" I said, casually, if I do say so, T.R. "That's very interesting. Tell me, young man, why do you want to sell Mr. Waters a duck?"

"Well you see, sir," he answered, "I've got to prove to my Uncle Hay Lowbridge that I can get a big order from him so he can retire and turn his duck business over to me. I'm going to show Mr. Waters my duck 'Waddle Life' I've got here. Isn't she a love? She's the best duck in the world. I wouldn't sell *her,* of course. I just show her to people so they can see what a nice thing it is to have a duck. Then when I get the duck business my Susabella will let me get engaged to her and that's good because I love my Susabella. I'm really her sweetie-pie but she won't admit it. Then pretty soon we'll get married and have some . . ."

"Here, my boy, wait a minute," I interrupted him. "You wanted to know where the Waters Sanitarium is, didn't you?"

"Yes sir," he said.

"You see that big red brick building over there across the square? Well, that's it."

"I thought that was a girls' private school," he said.

"Oh, no," I came back very seriously. "It used to be but it's the Waters Jitter Cure Sanitarium now."

"O-o-o-o-oh, I didn't kno-o-o-ow that," he answered in a funny way.

Please note here that I wasn't sending him to the Sanitarium. It was the girls' private school hereinbefore referred to. Penner entered the school. No evidence of activity issued therefrom for two and one-half minutes. Then a woman yelled, then sounds of running feet were noted. Then a young lady put head through second story window and began screaming. Clothes on aforesaid lady were scanty. Yelled something about man in room. *Shortly thereafter, duck was seen to sail from window, Penner following almost immediately.* Picked self up from lawn, recovered duck and ran down street. Stopped further along by old lady who began talking to him. At this point, I deemed it wise to return to hotel room.

Have scheduled second conference with Miss Van Dansa today. Indications point to her being able to take care of Penner. You may look forward to my being on my way back with Waters order by time you have received this.

Yours truly,
Upton Downey, Pres.

HOTEL SWELLVUE
Capa City
Wisconsin

May 28, 1928

Honey chocolate drop,

Well, Susabella, I guess you're going to be a June bride all right. I sold a duck today. That just shows you and uncle were all wrong about my not being able to sell them. Of course it wasn't to Waters, but he'll be easy.

It happened because some dumb guy sent me to a girls' school instead of Waters Sanitarium. I was in sort of a hurry when I left, and some nice old lady

"SO HERE I AM
IN JAIL . . ."

stopped me and asked me why I was running with a duck. I told her about Uncle Lowbridge and about you and how we were going to get married. She looked at me kind of queer for a minute, but when I said, "You wanna buy a duck?" she laughed and gave me $5.00 and told me where to send a duck. Pretty good salesmanship, eh kid?

Well, must close now, as I'm going down to dinner and then get a good night's sleep so I can close that deal with Waters tomorrow.

Love,
Joe.

xxxx q q q q (The q's are kisses from Waddle.)
J.
Love.

SUSABELLA BROWN
23 Lovejoy Street
Wheelboro
Indiana

May 30, 1928.

Dear Joe,

Maybe I *am* going to be a June bride, but what makes you so sure you're going to be the groom? I promised you I'd be *engaged* to you if you got the Waters Sanitarium order, not married. And I don't see much chance for the engagement unless you stop prying in girls' schools and selling ducks to kindly old ladies who buy only because they sympathize with you. Orders like that don't mean a thing.

Now listen, Joe. I know that this Mr. Waters is an old hard shell and that he's hard to get to. If he won't see you, go around town and talk to a few people who've done business with him. Get into their confidence and find out the best way to deal with him. That's the way to do good business.

Love,
Susabella.

TELEGRAM

MAY 30 1928

MR HAY LOWBRIDGE
LOWBRIDGE DUCK CORP
SAN INSPINICHA
CALIFORNIA
URGENT YOU WIRE ME SEVENTY-FIVE DOLLARS IMMEDIATELY STOP WILL EXPLAIN LATER WHEN FREE TO MAKE REPORT
JOE

TELEGRAM

MAY 30 1928

JOE PENNER
HOTEL SWELLVUE
CAPA CITY WISCONSIN
WHAT DO YOU MEAN WHEN FREE TO MAKE REPORT STOP NO MONEY UNTIL YOU SEND IT TO ME STOP YOU HAVE JUST THREE DAYS TO MAKE GOOD STOP THAT IS FINAL
UNCLE LOWBRIDGE

Capa City, Wisc.
May 30, 1928

Dear darling Susabella,

Please draw $75.00 out of the money you're keeping at the bank for me and send it by telegraph. I've run into an unforeseen difficulty.

Uncle Lowbridge wouldn't send me any because I guess he didn't understand what I meant that I couldn't send him his report until I was free to do so. Well I'm not free. I'm in jail.

It happened like this. When I first came to the Hotel Swellvue, they wouldn't let me in with the duck. Well, you know I couldn't think of having my darling ducky-wucky Waddle away from me, so I sneaked her into my room in my kit bag. Well, last night I took a bath and went down to dinner. The waiter came up to me and I asked him what he had.

"I've got duck," he said.

"So have I," I answered, quick, like that. "Wanna buy one?"

"My but you're amusing, sir," he answered. "But I'm really serious. The duck is very good tonight, sir. It's fresh killed."

"Well, I tell you, Susabella, right away I got scared somehow, thinking about Waddle all alone and unprotected up there in my room, so I ran up as fast as I could. And what do you think? Oh, it was terrible. I can't tell you how awfully bad I felt. Waddle was gone! There were feathers scattered all over the floor.

I grabbed the phone and called the house detective. When he got there he looked around and I told him what the matter was and he called the manager. When the manager came up, the detective told him about it and what do you think they did? Right in the midst of all my sorrow and tragedy they laughed. Laughed right out loud. Then pretty soon the manager stopped laughing and began to get sore and bawled me out for bringing the duck in when he'd forbidden it. I told him what a cruel person he was to laugh when Waddle had been so fowly done away with.

I began looking around, very sad, for the rest of Waddle's remains. I looked in the bathroom and at first I thought I was seeing a ghost because there was Waddle swimming around in the water I forgot to let out of the tub.

When I saw Waddle was really alive and all right and while I was hugging her, the manager began yelling at me about the feathers. I guess Waddle had pulled part of the stuffing out of the mattresses and pillows. The manager said I'd have to pay for them. Well, I didn't have the money *so here I am in jail,* so you better wire the money right away so I can get out and get the order from Waters.

Love,
Joe.

P.S. Please hurry, because I don't think the jail is good for Waddle's health.
P.P.S. I don't feel so good either.

TELEGRAM

JUNE 1 1928

MR JOE PENNER
CAPA CITY JAIL
CAPA CITY WISCONSIN
AM NOT WORRIED ABOUT WADDLES HEALTH AM WORRIED ABOUT HEALTH OF YOUR BRAIN IF YOU ARE SO MUCH MORE INTER-

"YOU'RE THE GREAT DUCK SALESMAN, AREN'T YOU?" SHE ASKED

-VEP-

ESTED IN WADDLES WELFARE THAN IN MINE WHY DON'T YOU MARRY HER HOWEVER HERE IS SEVENTY FIVE DOLLARS

SUSABELLA

Capa City, Wisc.
June 2, 1928

Dear sweet Susabella,

Thank you for sending the $75.00. The jail business is fixed up okay now. It really didn't amount to anything, anyhow. I wasn't worried at all. What do you mean, me marry Waddle. I don't know why you say such silly things.

I had a big idea today. I got it when I was moving my things to a boarding house. The hotel won't let me stay there any longer, so I got this place and I can keep Waddle in my room. The landlady said *she* didn't care. That *I* was the one who had to sleep there. Of course I am. I don't see why she had to tell me when I already knew it.

Anyhow, this idea was to get acquainted with someone in the town who could tell me all about Waters' business methods. Then when I go to see him I'll be all set and know how to tackle him. I found just the right person.

She's a very good-looking woman, kind of old, about thirty, I guess, but just the same, she's still pretty even when you sit very close to her. Anyway, I was walking along Main Street and she was standing in the door of a tea room and she stopped me.

"You're Mr. Penner, the great duck salesman, aren't you?" she asked me.

I admitted kind of modestly that I was. These pretty women I can always handle even when they give me a funny feeling in the pit of my stomach.

We got to talking and she said she was very much interested in ducks. She said she was Sally Van Dansa, isn't that a beautiful name, and that she owned the Dainty Step Inns tea rooms. She invited me in and had me served a swell dinner. I showed her how Waddle was the latest in ducks on account of his streamlines giving no wind resistance, particularly if he could fly backward. She said why didn't I teach him to do that, so you can see she's a pretty smart woman.

Well, anyhow, she was so interested that we sat talking until about midnight and she told me all about how to handle Waters and advised me not to go to see him the next day because he never buys anything on Friday. It's good to know things like that. Well, I guess that means it will be another day before I can close the Waters deal and get back to Wheelboro and be engaged to you.

Love,
Joe.

TELEGRAM

JUNE 3 1928

JOE PENNER
HOTEL SWELLVUE
CAPA CITY WISCONSIN
WHY IN BLAZES DONT YOU WRITE STOP ALL IS OFF UNLESS I HEAR FROM YOU IMMEDIATELY

UNCLE LOWBRIDGE

TELEGRAM

JUNE 3 1928

MR HAY LOWBRIDGE
LOWBRIDGE DUCK CORP
SAN INSPINACHA CALIFORNIA
AM NO LONGER AT HOTEL SWELLVUE STOP ADDRESS ME AT AWLA BOARDING HOUSE NINETY NINE MAIN STREET STOP CAN'T MAKE FURTHER REPORT NOW AS HAVE JUST CLOSED DEAL AND HAVE TO GET TO BANK WITH CHECK FOR FIVE THOUSAND DOLLARS

JOE

TELEGRAM

JUNE 3 1928

JOE PENNER
AWLA BOARDING HOUSE
NINETY NINE MAIN STREET
CAPA CITY WISCONSIN
CONGRATULATIONS ON CLOSING DEAL WITH WATERS STOP I'LL BELIEVE IT WHEN I SEE THE MONEY STOP AM ANXIOUSLY AWAITING DETAILS

UNCLE LOWBRIDGE

TELEGRAM

JUNE 4 1928

MR HAY LOWBRIDGE
LOWBRIDGE DUCK CORP
SAN INSPINACHA CALIFORNIA
DISREGARD LAST TELEGRAM STOP PLEASE WIRE POLICE CHIEF OF CAPA CITY THAT I AM NOT CROOK STOP HURRY STOP

JOE

HOTEL SWELLVUE
Capa City
Wisconsin

June 4, 1928.

Mr. Tommy Rawter, Sales Mgr.,
Downey Duck Dealers,
Hilo Alto, Cal.

Dear Rawter:

Yours of 2nd inst. rec'd and contents noted.

Am pleased to report progress. Miss Van Dansa said she'd given Penner "such a hot line he'd been juggling it for days." Miss Van Dansa is excellent conversationalist.

Consequently, figured Penner wouldn't be seeing Waters today, so drove to Sanitarium. While sitting in ante room waiting for Waters, Penner entered. Had with him duck, cigar, funny little hat. Was grinning like a slice

HE ATTACKED ME
IN THE PANTS
FROM BEHIND . . .

of watermelon. (How do you like that, T. R. "grinning like a slice of watermelon?")

A little of my strategy was essential at this point. Conversed with him as indicated: He said, "Aren't you the guy who told me the girls' private school was Waters Sanitarium?"

I said, "Not me, my lad. You've got me mixed up with somebody else. You've got business with Mr. Waters?"

"Yeh," he said, "I'm going to sell him a duck and then some more ducks. If I can get an order from him my Uncle Lowbridge will turn his business over to me and then I can get engaged to my Susabella and that will be very nice because I love my Susabella very . . . ."

Decided unnecessary to hear foregoing line again, so pretended to be surprised. Said, "You're not *the* Penner, are you? Not *Joe* Penner, the great duck salesman?"

Penner's chest swelled so you would have thought he was in the pouter pigeon instead of the duck line. (Watch these expressions of mine, T. R. Your reports lack color and humor.)

"How does everybody seem to know who I am?" Penner said. "Why only yesterday a very pretty woman. . . ." Then he stopped and got very serious.

"What's the matter, Mr. Penner," I asked him. "This is Friday, isn't it?" he asked. "Sure," I said, "this is Friday." "Oh my goonuss," he said. "This is the day I'm *not* supposed to see Mr. Waters. Well, g'bye." "So long," I said.

Watched Penner from windows of sanitarium as he started across grounds. Two of people taking Jitter Cure stopped him and began pointing at Penner's duck. Couldn't tell what they were saying, but could see he was making effort to sell them. One of the two took out slip of paper, wrote on it, handed it to Penner. Penner singing as he went out gate.

Had conference with Waters shortly thereafter. Seems to like proposition on our 21-K grade ducks. He stipulates that whatever ducks he buys, he must have exclusively in this territory. Miss Van Dansa has planned campaign to make Lowbridge ducks decidedly non-exclusive, so that clears way for us. Waters says he expected Lowbridge Corp. to send representative, but is tired of waiting. Requests about three days to think over, and if he doesn't hear from Lowbridge by then, will close with me.

Looks as though your president, in connection with Sally Van Dansa, is doing shrewd piece of business.

Yours truly,
Upton Downey.

SUSABELLA BROWN
23 Lovejoy Street
Wheelboro,
Indiana

June 4, 1928

Dearest Joe,

What in heavens name is the matter with you? Isn't it enough to be incarcerated in jail once? Your Uncle Lowbridge just long distanced me that you telegraphed him to tell the police of Capa City you were not a crook. Whether he's going to do it or not, I don't know. I know you're not crooked, Joe; I just know that you can't think straight.

I'll bet that Sally Van Dansa woman had something to do with getting you locked up again. When any woman plays up to you like she has, she must have some very selfish motive. And by the way, it was *my* idea, not *yours,* that you get someone to give you the inside on Waters' business methods, so don't go claiming credit for it.

However, I must say I'm sorry I brought it up. I should have known you'd have picked some scheming love artist like her. For heavens sake, Joe, when you get out of jail don't see Sally Van Dansa again. If she isn't scheming to make duck hash out of your deal then she knows that you have some remote chance of inheriting a business, and she wants a nice slice of breast meat.

And don't try to tell me that you can handle women. You probably do handsprings every time she flicks an eyelash. And if you think for a minute, Joe Penner, that I'm going to stand for that sort of faithlessness, you're even less mentally competent than I thought you were. I'm just going to give my much tried heart to Mr. Barney Cull, who'll appreciate it, whatever condition you've left it in.

Susabella.

P.S. Your mother's baked you one of those banana and pineapple cakes you like so much and wants to know where she should send it.

S.

AWLA BOARDING HOUSE
99 Main Street
Capa City,
Wisconsin.

June 6, 1928

Dear double sugar plum,

I don't think you understand your little Joey. They didn't incarcerate me in jail. They treated me very nice. All they did was lock me up.

Anyhow, it happened like this. I was coming out of Waters' office in his Sanitarium Friday afternoon and a man and a woman stopped me on the lawn.

"Oh, what a pretty goose you have," one of them said.

"It's a duck," I told them, nice like to show them I wouldn't be snooty about their very ignorance.

"And what, Robin Goodfellow," said the man, "wouldst do with yon quail."

"It's not a quail. It's a duck. I know because I'm Joe Penner. Don't be so foolish."

"Ah," said the woman, "penner wise and pound foolish."

"You're improving, my dear," the man said.

Well, Susabella, I tell you, I began to feel very funny. They were acting so queer. I started to go away, but the man grabbed me by the arm. He said, "Wait a moment, Mr. Tenor, how much will you sell your partridge for?" Well, I knew he meant my duck, so I said, "Well, I won't sell you Waddle, but you really wanna buy a duck?" "Wanna buy one?" he said, "I wanna buy five thousand." "That'll be five thousand dollars," I said.

Well, Susabella, what do you think? Right there he wrote me out a check and gave it to me. When I looked around at the gate to wave to them, some woman friend of theirs dressed up all in white was taking them by the arms into the Sanitarium.

When I got to the bank, the man in the cage looked at me kind of funny and asked if I was known here. I said I wasn't, and he said wait a minute and the next thing I knew a policeman was pulling me down the street.

I got mad.

"Yo-o-o-ou Na-h-asty man," I said.

He attacked me in the pants from behind with his club which was very treacherous, which stung very much. Then they locked me up. I tell you, I'm going to get tired of that jail after a while. Well, anyhow, next day, the police chief came and he said my Uncle Lowbridge had telegraphed him I didn't have the mental stamina to be a crook and I guess that was pretty fine of Uncle to stand up for me like that.

The chief told me never again to take checks from people who were under the impression they had money

"I PUT MY SWEETIE DUCK
TO THE MICROPHONE . . ."
VEP-

in the bank, when the bank was not under the same impression, anyhow, it was so mixed up. I was glad to get out.

But what do you think Uncle meant when he wired me he was getting me out in spite of the fact that he thought it would be better for his business if I stayed in jail? I guess he doesn't know how hard it is to do business from a place like that.

About this Sally Van Dansa I don't think you understand women like I do. Here is part of a note I just got from her.

"I realize that it's an imposition to ask for the time of so busy and so great a duck salesman as you, Mr. Penner. Yet you told me the other day that you wanted to show your appreciation for my giving you advice about Mr. Waters. I tell you how you can do it, Joe. Come motoring with me Sunday. I'll prepare a lunch, and we'll have a picnic beneath the cool pines on the lake shore, alone with ourselves and Nature."

Well, Susabella, when you've gotta go, you've gotta go! Then I can get some more advice about Waters so I can see him Monday because he's going away Tuesday for a day or two. You can see that everything between me and Miss Van Dansa is platoonic.

Joe.

P.S. Barney Cull is not so much. All he does is run a department store and sort of sit on the board of selectmen once in a while and talk about that land he owns. Just wait till I close that deal with Waters.

J.

P.P.S. Besides, it's not polite to go around with another fellow when you're going to be engaged to me so soon.

J.

TELEGRAM

JUNE 8 1928

JOE PENNER
AWLA BOARDING HOUSE
99 MAIN STREET
CAPA CITY WISCONSIN

JUST RECEIVED CONFIDENTIAL REPORT THAT DOWNEY SPENT SUNDAY AFTERNOON WITH WATERS STOP WHERE WERE YOU

UNCLE LOWBRIDGE

TELEGRAM

JUNE 8 1928

MR HAY LOWBRIDGE
LOWBRIDGE DUCK CORP
SAN INSPINACHA CAL

DONT WORRY ABOUT DOWNEY STOP JUST LISTEN TO BROADCAST ON KWAK TOMORROW NIGHT AT SEVEN THIRTY STOP AM PUTTING ON BIG SALES DRIVE

JOE

AWLA BOARDING HOUSE
99 Main Street
Capa City,
Wisconsin

June 8, 1928.

Susabella snookums,

Hey, girl old girl. Your Joe's going to be a radio star. Have I got a real plan for selling Waters or have I or have I? Worked it out Sunday when I was with Miss Van Dansa. He'll fall for it like balloon ballast. Sally says he's dumb as everything and I'm beginning to think so myself. Anyhow the old sap'll certainly be a sucker for this one.

You see, his worst weakness is always buying things that other people buy, so I'm going to put on a big broadcast over KWAK in Capa City and promote Lowbridge Ducks. Then when everybody's buying, the old boy will be a sucker. Will I take him? Will I take him?

Well, Susabella, soon's I get the old buzzard signed up, I'll be home, and we'll start out life on his money.

Love,
Joe.

TELEGRAM

JUNE 9 1928

MR TOMMY RAWTER SALES MGR
DOWNEY DUCK DEALERS
HILO ALTO CAL

ADVISE YOU CATCH KWAK BROADCAST TONIGHT SEVEN THIRTY STOP WILL BE FINAL STROKE IN OUR GETTING WATERS' BUSINESS

DOWNEY

Capa City Manor,
June 10, 1828

Susabella toodles,

That was some broadcast, wasn't it. It certainly got a reaction from the Capa City citizens. I can't tell you exactly how much, because the station manager advised me to come out here to Capa City Manor and lay low for awhile. I guess that's the penalty of being a radio star overnight.

I lined up Dr. Dyott, the great Capa City food specialist to give a testimonial. He's very popular with the citizens. Why I even heard a man once questioned his honesty and they nearly mobbed the guy. Anyhow, I thought a doctor as popular as that ought to be good to have on the broadcast.

Well, I started giving my little talk. At first it was kind of unconcerting not to have any answer. But pretty soon we could hear some shouts from outside and I knew the listeners were cheering. Well, that warmed me up. I sang a song, then I told them some more about Lowbridge Ducks. I could hear the cheering getting louder. The station manager stuck his head in the door and he looked kind of funny. Guess he wasn't used to having such good programs on.

Anyhow, for the big windup, just after Dr. Dyott finished speaking, I was having Waddle speak. *I put up my sweetie duck to the microphone* and she made a swell quack. Did you hear it? I turned to Dr. Dyott and said:

"Some quack, doctor."

"I GOT ON THE CITY HALL STEPS . . ."

Well, then the station manager hurried in and took me by the arm. "We got to get out of here quick, bud," he said. They's quite a mob outside here."

"What do they want?" I asked.

"They want you. Come on, we'll go down these stairs here and out the back way."

"Oh, I see," I said. "You're afraid they'll get hold of me like they do Lindbergh or Clark Gable and tear my coat and shirt off for souvenirs."

"Well, something like that, bud," he said. Then he put me in his car and we drove very fast to Capa City Manor and he told me not to come back in the daytime for awhile. It seems kind of funny to me but such is what fame costs, Susabella, such is what fame costs.

Love,
Joe.

P.S. I guess that shows up Barney Cull all right. He hasn't ever been a radio star.

J.

SUSABELLA BROWN
23 Lovejoy Street
Wheelboro
Indiana

June 11, 1928.

Dear Joe,

If you are a radio star, I'll need the Mt. Wilson telescope to see you.

Oh Joe, dear, can't you understand why the station manager wanted you to leave town? I'm afraid you've mixed things up terribly. I just can't see any hope for us, Joe. It isn't that I'm not fond of you, but it's just that I can't go on waiting and waiting and see you bungle things. I have a right to be sure of a secure future. You see that, don't you? If I thought it'd do any good, I'd wait, but I can't see that it will. Why don't you come home and take a job here? Barney Cull still says he will give you one. Anyhow, no matter what happens, please be sure that I'll always be a friend.

Susabella.

P.S. Enclosed is a letter you wrote to Mr. Waters telling him to listen to the broadcast. You must have mailed him the one you wrote to me. I only know that you were going on the air because you said for him to listen in. I hope you didn't say anything in the letter to me that would have offended him.

S.

Capa City Manor
June 12, 1928.

Dear Susabella,

Oh my goonuss. I guess Waters must have gotten the letter I wrote to you. I guess I said some things about him in it that he won't like very much.

Don't you worry your pretty little head about this, though. Leave it to the man to take care of everything. You just be getting your trousseau ready. Because I'm going to show my master stroke of supersalesmanship today. I'm going to surprise the populace of Capa City. Last night I sneaked into town and posted notices around that I'd be on the City Hall steps at noon to give a final demonstration on the superiority of Lowbridge ducks. After that broadcast, I'm bound to get a crowd, and then Waters can't help buying after that.

It won't be long now.

Love,
Joe.

TELEGRAM

JUNE 12 1928

MR HAY LOWBRIDGE
LOWBRIDGE DUCK CORP
SAN INSPINACHA CAL

PLEASE ADVISE WHAT DISPOSAL YOU WANT MADE OF TEMPORARY INMATE OF OUR SANITARIUM WHO CLAIMS TO BE YOUR NEPHEW STOP HE IS BECOMING VIOLENT UNDER CONFINEMENT STOP WATERS WHO IS HEAD OF SANITARIUM IS AWAY SO PLEASE ADVISE AT ONCE

ASST SUPT WATERS JITTER
CURE SANITARIUM

June 12, 1928

Dear Susabella,

I got to write this in an awful hurry. I'm in a terrible mixup. I'm locked in a room in the Waters Sanitarium. I promised an attendant two dollars if she'd get this letter out and mail it for me which she said she would.

Old man Waters will be back from his trip any time now, and if he finds out I'm here, he'll be pretty sore because I guess he must be mad about what I said about him in the letter I wrote to you but which I mailed to him by mistake.

I still don't quite understand what happened. *I got to the City Hall steps as my posters said I would and there was a big mob.* When I got there they all started for me. I guessed they were going to acclaim me. But a man with a badge grabbed me and shooed them away a little bit and said, "He's not well," and pointed to his head. What did he mean?

Well, as soon as I get out—oh gosh, there's some one yelling in a loud voice. I can hear it through the door. Oh gosh, oh jimminy, it's Waters and he just got back and heard I am here. He sounds hysterical! O-o-o-e-o "I want that Penner fellow," he's screaming. "Take me to Penner," he's yelling.

He's starting down the hall now. I'll close and give this to the guard quick before he gets here.

"All is lost, the captain shouted."

Joe.

HOTEL SWELLVUE
Capa City
Wisconsin

June 12, 1928.

Mr. Tommy Rawter, Sales Mgr.,
Downey Duck Dealers,
Hilo Alto, Cal.

Dear Rawter:

Please be advised that Waters contract is a certainty now—for 10,000 ducks anyhow, T. R. Below is given list of expenses incurred in last three days, okayed by me, of course. Please have cashier credit them to my account.

"ASK MOTHER TO GET OUT
MY DRESS SHIRT STUDS . . ."

-VER-

To Sally Van Dansa $2,500.00
(Persuading Penner to put on broadcast which was so bad he barely escaped being mobbed.)

To Sheriff 125.00
(For saving him from mob on reappearance next day and having him confined in Sanitarium.)

Total $2,625.00

It may seem like a lot of money for expenses to you, T. R., but when you've been in the game as long as I have, you'll see that it pays.

I guess that disposes of Penner. Tell the boys in the office they'll get a bonus next month.

Yours truly,
Upton Downey.

TELEGRAM

JUNE 13 1928

MR HAY LOWBRIDGE
LOWBRIDGE DUCK CORP
SAN INSPINACHA CAL

PLEASE WIRE ME FIFTY DOLLARS FOR PURCHASE OF NEW EVENING CLOTHES

JOE

TELEGRAM

JUNE 13 1928

MISS SUSABELLA BROWN
23 LOVEJOY STREET
WHEELBORO IND

PLEASE ASK MOTHER TO GET OUT MY DRESS SHIRT STUDS AND CUFF LINKS AND SEND THEM IMMEDIATELY

JOE

TELEGRAM

JUNE 13 1928

JOE PENNER
WATERS JITTER CURE SANITARIUM
CAPA CITY WIS

AM NOT WIRING AUTHORITY TO HAVE YOU RELEASED STOP YOUR LAST TELEGRAM DEFINITELY INDICATES YOU ARE CRAZY STOP SINCE YOU HAVE PROVEN YOURSELF INCAPABLE OF HANDLING MY BUSINESS I WASH MY HANDS OF YOU

LOWBRIDGE

TELEGRAM

JUNE 13 1928

JOE PENNER
WATERS JITTER CURE SANITARIUM
CAPA CITY WIS

YOU ARE POSITIVELY CRUEL NOT TO LET US KNOW WHAT HAS HAPPENED STOP ARE YOU SAFE AND WELL STOP YOUR MOTHER CANT FIND SHIRT STUDS ANYWHERE STOP WHERE ARE THEY

SUSABELLA

TELEGRAM

JUNE 14 1928

MISS SUSABELLA BROWN
23 LOVEJOY STREET
WHEELBORO IND

IN UPPER BUREAU DRAWER

JOE

TELEGRAM

JUNE 14 1928

JOE PENNER
WATERS JITTER CURE SANITARIUM
CAPA CITY WIS

WHICH UPPER BUREAU DRAWER STOP WHY DONT YOU SEND EXPLANATION OF ALL THIS STOP WE ARE NEARLY CRAZY

SUSABELLA

TELEGRAM

JUNE 14 1928

MISS SUSABELLA BROWN
23 LOVEJOY STREET
WHEELBORO IND

UPPER LEFT HAND DRAWER STOP TAKE REMAINING SIXTY EIGHT DOLLARS THIRTY TWO CENTS OF MY MONEY AND BUY ENGAGEMENT RING

JOE

TELEGRAM

JUNE 14 1928

JOE PENNER
WATERS JITTER CURE SANITARIUM
CAPA CITY WIS

SENT STUDS BUT EVERYTHING OFF BETWEEN US UNLESS YOU EXPLAIN YOURSELF IMMEDIATELY

SUSABELLA

TELEGRAM

JUNE 14 1928

MR TOMMY RAWTER
DOWNEY DUCK DEALERS
HILO ALTO CAL

MAN IDENTIFIED AS UPTON DOWNEY FELL OR JUMPED FROM TENTH STORY BEDROOM WINDOW OF MIASMA HOTEL LAST NIGHT STOP WHAT SHALL I DO WITH THE BODY

CHIEF OF CAPA CITY POLICE

Mr. Tommy Rawter, Sales Mgr.,
Downey Duck Dealers,
Hilo Alto, Cal.

Dear Rawter,

By the time you receive this, I will have met my maker. Fate has turned against me. That guy Penner and his bloomin' duck are my Nemesis. With him in the business, we'll all go crazy. I cannot carry on. This is the end. Farewell, old friend, farewell.

Your ex-president,

Upton Downey.

TELEGRAM

JUNE 14 1928

MR HAY LOWBRIDGE
LOWBRIDGE CORP
SAN INSPINACHA CAL

SHIP IMMEDIATELY TEN THOUSAND YOU HEARD ME TEN THOUSAND DUCKS TO WATERS SANITARIUM STOP YOUR RESIGNATION AS PRESIDENT OF HAY LOWBRIDGE DUCK COMPANY ACCEPTED STOP AM CHANGING NAME TO JOE PENNER DUCK COMPANY

JOE PENNER PRESIDENT

WATERS JITTER CURE SANITARIUM
Capa City,
Wisconsin

June 15, 1928.

My own darling Susabella,

I'm kind of sorry for keeping you worried, but I knew you'd much rather learn about everything as it came out in the Capa City Courier. I've pasted it on below.

PENNER IS FETED
AS HERO OF HOUR

Waters Presides at Dinner
for Owner of Waddle,
Girl's Life Saver

One of the most distinguished gatherings in the history of Capa City assembled at the Waters Sanitarium last night to pay honor to Joe Penner, brilliant salesman of the Lowbridge Duck Company and his highly intelligent duck, Waddle Life. Toasts were drunk to Penner, the duck and Harding Waters.

A few minutes prior to Mr. Waters' return from an out of town trip two days ago, his four year old daughter, Deepa Waters, was playing near the fish pond on the Sanitarium grounds. All of a sudden, one of the attendants heard furious quacking and upon investigation, discovered that Mr. Penner's duck was setting up a hue and cry because the little girl had fallen into the water. Had it not been for the timely warning of the intelligent fowl, the incident would have ended in tragedy. As it was, attendants saved the child from certain drowning with no damage to her.

Well, Susabella, there's a lot more, but I haven't time to cut it all out now. I'm going to pack my bags and take the five-forty-three home.

Your sweety pie,

Joe.

TELEGRAM

JUNE 16 1928

JOE PENNER PRESIDENT
JOE PENNER DUCK COMPANY
CAPA CITY WISCONSIN

YOU WIN EXCLAMATION POINT

HAY LOWBRIDGE
EX PRESIDENT

TELEGRAM

JUNE 16 1928

JOE PENNER
WATERS JITTER CURE SANITARIUM
CAPA CITY WISCONSIN

DONT FORGET TO BRING HOME COMPLETE EDITION OF CAPA CITY COURIER SO WE CAN READ IT ON OUR HONEYMOON YOUR DARLING

SUSABELLA

Printed in U. S. A. by Art Color Printing Company, Dunellen, N. J.

OUT OF JOE'S MAILBAG

OVER a thousand letters reach Joe Penner each week. Four secretaries work frantically eight hours a day to answer them. All walks of life are represented—young, old, blind, deaf, rich, poor, all enthusiastic over this Simple Simon of the Baker's Broadcast.

This is one that had to be translated from Braille, the handwriting for the blind:

School for Blind,
Overbrook, Pa.

Dear Mr. Penner,

I think your programs are very good and I like them very much. We listen to you every Sunday. I can imitate you a little. One of my teachers calls me Joe Penner.

Please sing "When the pussywillow whispers to the catnip" and "Susa Bella." I would like to hear them very much.

I shall be glad if you sing them for me—as a request. I shall close.

Your radio friend,
Miss —— ——.

Youngsters are among his warmest admirers. Read this ingenuous note:

Chicago, Ill.

Dear Joe,

I axidently heard your program Thursday, and it was swell. Please send me an autograft picture of you. Are you going to stay on that same progrham? Maybe you would like to know what is going on hear. Well, I am in 4th Grade, (4A,) (high 4th,). I am nine years of age. Its pertty slippery out hear. The reason I am not writing so good is, because the teacher told me to write a different way. I write left handed. I used to slant my paper like this, (Editor's Note: at this point is a drawn illustration) *but she told me to do it this way.* (Another illustration.) *I will keep listening in. This is all I can write because I have to wipe the dishes.*

Your Listener,
—— ——.

Schoolboys and schoolgirls have formed many a Joe Penner Club. Here is a prep school lad who says:

Peddie School,
Hightstown, N. J.

Dear Mr. Penner,

I wanna buy a duck! Really, my room here at school is so full on Sunday evening while you broadcast that I can hardly breathe. And we all think your program is great. In fact, the whole school has been imitating you, so we might as well change the name of the school to "Penner" . . . Since my room is the meeting place for your broadcast, we all considered and felt that if we were to ask you, you might send us an autographed photo of yourself . . . It will be great to have it for our wall. . . .

Good luck for every program you broadcast and may your name never die in the annals of humor.

Very sincerely yours,
—— ——.

Even the ministry approves, as this letter indicates:

Dear Mr. Penner:

Just to let you know that the CLERGY like the clean cut vaudeville that you have been giving us. Keep up the good work and DON'T sell the duck.

Luck, success and happiness to you in the POULTRY business.

Rev. John R.——.

Someone recently compared the Joe Penner of today with the Charlie Chaplin of the early two-reel comedy days. His humor is elemental and clean, his appeal attracts both kids and grandmothers. Here is a letter about one that will interest you:

Roslindale,
Massachusetts.

Mr. Joe Penner,
Care Station WBZ,
Boston, Mass.

Dear Mr. Penner:

I am writing in behalf of my mother to tell you how much she enjoys your programs. She is almost 72 years old and enjoys the radio, but in all sincerity I can say she looks forward to your broadcasts with more enthusiasm and eagerness than anything else that comes over the air.

This week-end she was confined to her bed suffering from bronchitis and had not bothered about the radio, but in the middle of the afternoon Sunday she said "Don't forget Joe Penner." Seven-thirty found the radio going louder than ever to carry to her bedroom and she thoroughly enjoyed the program. It was the only time she laughed all week-end.

Sincerely,
Alice S. ——.

Sometimes a word of warning reaches him:

Kalamazoo,
Michigan.

Mr. Joe Penner,
Dear Sir:

Just a line to tell you we certainly enjoy your programs. You are a good comedian, but I principally want to commend you for keeping your broadcasts free of suggestive jokes. I hear numberless people speak of it. You know, there are more people who desire things that are clean than those who crave things which are filthy, suggestive and corrupt. Think of the children of all ages who listen to your broadcast. You are very popular without resorting to this kind of thing. Please do not sing the "Wicked Woman" song any more or any more like it.

Mrs. —— ——.

Occasionally, a listener gets bothered about that duck. Often they send him ducks. Letters like this one, we think, express the opinion of a whole army of youngsters:

Cleveland,
Ohio.

Mr. Penner,

I always hear you over the radio. Sometimes you say to somebody do you want to buy a duck! It bothers me because nobody wants to buy your duck. And if they don't I will.

When you come to Cleveland I sure am going to see you. I like to mock you. I never miss hearing you wherever I am. I am 9 years old. And don't fail to come to Cleveland or I will be disappointed.

Well so long Joe Penner and hope you stay on the air.

Goodbye,
Harvey J. ——.

Four secretaries work every day to answer the thousands of letters Penner gets

WANNA BUY A DUCK OF A MAGAZINE?

Radio Stars is a swull magazine. To be sure. To be sure. Do-o-on't never try to sell Joe Penner anything else! Do-o-on't never do-o-o that!

RADIO STARS is crammed full of gossip about the stars of broadcastland and news of all the studios. It takes you behind the scenes of big programs, adding new interest and pleasure to your radio entertainment. The people who create radio shows and the artists who bring them into your home live exciting lives, filled to the brim with amusing and interesting incidents. It is the true inside story of these fascinating people that make big stories in RADIO STARS. You'll enjoy it from cover to cover.

In addition to gossip and news, you will find a complete program directory in each issue. RADIO STARS is the only monthly radio magazine with a program section listing daily programs . . . each program being identified by the name of the sponsor.

Profusely illustrated with large rotogravure portraits of radio personalities. RADIO STARS is one of the most beautiful magazines of its kind in existence.

Go to your nearest newsdealer today. Get a copy of this entertaining magazine. Don't delay. They sell out fast.

Largest Circulation of any Radio Magazine

RADIO STARS 10c